AFTER RAIN.

By H. M. Merrill.

Clouds rifted, seaward drifted like white sails.
A silver rain upon the tangled grasses,
A sweet wind on the mountain where it passes
We'll follow sunward by the lichened rails.

Within the gray, thin shadow of the beeches,
By white pools sleeping in the yellow sun,
On fountain slopes where sparkling shallows run
Beyond the meadows into piney reaches—

Your hand, dear, so—I'll guide you where the flowers
Are new-blown, blue and golden, where the drumming
Of some lone partridge sounds and brown bees' humming—
Into the silentnesses of dim bowers.

OUT OF STEP.

III.

"WHY DID YOU WAIT?"

Moore, as he had walked up from the station, had seen the big horse coming along the road. It had approached swiftly, and the driver of it, sitting alone in the carriage, had stared hard at the man walking so fast. To Moore that man's face was familiar, yet at the moment he could not quite place it in his mind. And why was there something so baleful in it?

When the horse and wagon had gone on, and the hot, dusty highway was solitary again, save for his own figure, Moore exclaimed:

"Why, it was Redd!" And then he had immediately forgotten Redd. He had something far nearer his heart to think of.

Now, when he had left Mrs. Gerry he went as hurriedly as if he had not almost three hours to kill before he could hope to see Salome. He pushed through the birch thicket and never stopped in his walk until he came to another road which went curving through a pine wood.

His face was streaming with perspiration. He took off his hat and tried to remain quietly sitting by the wayside. He leaned back against a tree and gazed down the dim, secluded highway. He thought it was beautiful. He said aloud that it was beautiful. But he knew that he cared nothing at all for it. He looked at his watch again. It had taken him just thirteen minutes to come here. He supposed that the time would pass, since time always did pass—if you could only endure it. He rose impatiently and crowded his hat down upon his head.

There was some one turning the curve far along in the gloom of the pine trees. It was a woman, too. It was a young girl.

Moore's face suddenly grew pale from the furious beat of his pulses. He began walking quickly. For some reason Salome might have left school earlier. The two drew nearer each other. It was Salome.

She suddenly stood still. He could see her hands hanging clasped tightly in front of her. He could see those hands, and her white face, and yet it seemed to him that there was something over his eyes. And in his haste he stumbled, and it took him so long to reach her that he felt as if he were in a dream.

But he did reach her. He had her in his arms, and he looked down at her face on his shoulder. Why should either of them speak?

After a while the two were walking slowly along under the trees. Moore was still holding his companion closely. He had said,

"I had to come."

She had looked up at him and answered softly,

"Yes, of course you would come."

And then there was a long silence while they walked aimlessly, and looked at each other.

Salome had thought that when he came she should ask him many questions, she should tell him many things: but now that he had come she felt as if she had no speech. And what were mere words, now that he was with her? There was no fact in all the world but the fact that he had come to her.

In this first moment there was no shrinking, no maidenly self-consciousness, in the serious, full gaze that met his. It was her soul meeting his in his eyes.

It was Moore's face which suddenly changed in some indescribable way. There was still the rapture of the meeting in it. But there was something else—a memory, a cloud came to it. Whatever it was it seemed intolerable to him. Before he could speak he exclaimed:

"Oh, why didn't you write me that line before?"

"Before?" she repeated in a puzzled way. "But it is now a long time since I wrote. You have been away?"

"No; I haven't been away. I received your note the day after you sent it."

Salome looked at him in surprise. She moved a little away from him.

"You were kept from coming?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered hesitatingly, "I was kept." Then he reached forward and took her hands ghtly, exclaiming again, and even with fierceness:

"Oh, why didn't you write a few months before? I tell you it's a devilish thing you have done by waiting all this time!"

These words seemed so entirely unlike Moore, and the blackness now in his face seemed also so entirely unlike him, that Salome stared and shrank away.

"I don't know what you mean," she said at last.

She tried to stand erect and removed from him. But he would not let her.

"You ought to know what I mean," he went on rapidly. "You told me there was no hope. Do you remember those times when I came again and again to Augustine to plead with you? You couldn't relent. You loved me, but you were hard as stone in your resolution. I wanted you. Since I knew all about you, and you were not deceiving me, you ought to have married me then. And all this time I have tried not to hope that you would send me word. Finally I gave up hope. That is, I gave it up so far that I had made up my mind that I'd do all I could to shut out the memory of you. Salome, do you understand me?"

He turned toward her with a mixture of passion and regret upon his face that had a terrible effect upon her. She was stunned, bewildered, but she did not know what he meant.

"Do you understand me?" he asked again

"No, no," she answered.

"Didn't you ever think that there comes a time when a man—or woman, I suppose, gives up hoping and tries to put away every thought of what he believes he cannot have? Didn't you ever think that?"

"No," said Salome again. She was trying, in a vague and feeble way to recall what her mother had said to her—was it upon this subject? What was coming to her? Had her mother been right in some way? Perhaps people who were older had learned some things. But it was of no good if they had—of no good. She could not learn by the experience of other people.

When she had said that last "no" Moore was for a moment unable to go on. He thought there had been no words made fit to use in a moment like this. And yet how could he keep silent?

Salome was now walking apart from him. She had quietly insisted upon withdrawing herself.

She suddenly turned from the road and sat down on a stone. She took off her hat and pressed her hands for an instant to her head.

Moore stood before her gazing down at her with the look a man gives to that which is inestimably precious. The black look was gone from his face. But there was still intense suffering there.

At first she did not glance up at him.

"Oh, Salome!" he said softly

She looked at him now. He appeared to resist something, then he threw himself down on his knees by her side and put his arms about her. She was frightened by the solemnity in his face.

"What is the matter?" she asked after a pause, during which she had gazed intently at him. "Why won't you tell me? You say I ought to have sent for you before; but now that I have sent for you it seems all wrong."

"Yes; it is too late."

When he had said this Moore suddenly pressed his face against the girl's shoulder. She felt him shudder as he did so. She wondered why she was so calm. She thought she ought to be very thankful that she could be so calm, for surely a great, a terrible trouble was upon her. It had come to her, since Moore could say that "it was too late."

But she was sure that he loved her. She was sure of that. Then how could it be too late? Could it be that—— Here Salome sprang away. Moore rose quickly to his feet.

"What!" cried the girl, "Is it Portia Nunally?"

"Yes," said Moore.

"Oh!"

Having uttered that cry Salome's lips closed as if it could not be worth while to open them again. She picked up her hat from the thick carpet of pine needles upon which she had thrown it. As she did so she thought that those needles would be a good place upon which to lay herself down. Would it not be a pleasant thing to do to lie there until she died? Of course she should die in a very little while. Her mother would be very sorry; her mother would miss her as long as she lived.

Salome turned to her companion.

"I will go home now," she said.

She placed her hat on her head. She drew her hands across her face as if she were smoothing away something. She could not be grateful enough that she was so calm.

She began to walk onward quickly. Moore kept by her side. They had gone only a few rods when it seemed as if fire suddenly flashed through Salome's brain. But her face kept its pale tint. Only her eyes were red. She was not calm any longer. Perhaps she had not been calm at all.

"Portia Nunally!"

She pronounced the name with such an accent that the very air seemed to thrill with it. Then she laughed as she went on:

"I was very stupid, wasn't I, to write to you? As you say, a man—and perhaps a woman also—gives up hope after a while. A man tries to forget suffering. That's the way to do. It was so very stupid of me to write to you. And how strange that I had forgotten Miss Nunally! I did not forget her for a long time. She is not a woman to be forgotten. But when I knew that she had gone to Europe with Mrs. Darrah, I did forget her. I thought that she was occupying herself with other plans. Oh, Mr. Moore, you see how silly I have been!"

Salome pulled a little silver watch from her belt and looked down at it, wondering as she did so why her eyes burned in that way.

"Mr. Moore, what time does your train go?" she asked.

There was no answer. Moore was striding on with his head bent. He was asking himself incessantly one question:

"Why didn't I wait? Why didn't I wait?"

Then he told himself furiously that it was perfectly natural that he should not have waited any longer without a shadow of hope. But since he loved Salome, why marry at all if he could not marry her?

But it was perfectly natural, perfectly natural—with violent insistance in his own mind—that he should seek for some consolation. If he had ever thought himself to be different from other men, he could now assure himself that he was precisely like the ordinary human being.

"Does your train start soon, Mr. Moore?"

As Salome repeated this question the young man turned toward her.

He was feeling that he must find some terrible words to throw from him like missiles. If he could not find them how could he speak? What an accursed imbecile he had been in that he had obeyed this girl and kept away from her! For a freak she had forbidden him to come. Now a freak had made her write to him that she had changed her mind. Of course she had changed her mind. And changed it too late.

"I don't know when my train starts," he at last made answer to her question. "Are you in a hurry for me to go?"

"Yes."

She stopped in her walk. Her hands were pressed on her chest in the gesture she had learned when she was subject to that painful oppression there.

"Didn't Miss Nunally go to Europe?" she asked.

She looked like one who is impelled to press a knife into a wound.

"Yes, she went," was the answer.

"But she did not stay?" went on Salome.

"No; she did not stay."

"You have seen her often?"

"Yes."

"I knew"—here Salome paused, but only for a brief space. She began again, "I knew that she loved you. At least, I felt sure of it."

There was no response from Moore. He also had stopped in his walk. He stood looking at his companion. He heard but vaguely the name of Miss Nunally. He was trying to overcome his tempestuous and unreasoning anger—his anger at fate, at God, at the whole universe. Why should he be made to suffer so? What had he done that this agony should be inflicted upon him?

"Mrs. Darrah has written to me a few times," said Salome. "She said that Portia had engaged herself to a man over there in London—to a man who was greatly in love with her, and who was rich."

"Yes," said Moore, in the same short way.

"It did not last then?" questioned Salome.

"No: it did not last."

Salome was congratulating herself that she could speak consecutive sentences But she wished that her eyes did not burn so. Since Moore was going to marry Portia, of course it was natural that she should show some interest. But she wished that Moore would go. At any moment it might happen that she would lose the power to speak consecutive sentences. And when that time came she would rather be alone. She did not understand why she should for a breath feel that she could not endure the excitement upon her, and then should think she was calm. But she felt that Moore ought to go.

She glanced up at him. She was aware immediately that she was saying:

"Perhaps you are already married?"

She thought it would be something of a relief if he should say yes to that question.

"No; but it is the same thing so far as honor is concerned. I am to be married next week. Next Tuesday evening at half-past 7 o'clock. Just four days from now. What a lucky thing it was that you should send me that note, Salome!"

"Does Portia know I sent it?"

"No."

"Then I don't see why it cannot be the same as if I had never sent it. My mother knows, but that changes nothing. Let it be as if I had not written it, Mr. Moore."

"Certainly; just as if you had not written it. How easily you solve questions, Salome!"

The girl glanced up at him again. Then she made a quick movement forward.

"Oh, I must go! I must go!" she cried.

She hurried on along the dusty road. Moore stood watching her. He was trying to resolve to let her go. Surely it was best now that she should go. What more had he to say to her? Absolutely nothing. He could never have anything more to say to her as long as he lived. Not if he were an honorable man. Then another phase of honor came before him. The final vow had not been spoken. Perhaps when Portia understood matters, she would release him. He had been greatly attracted to Portia. A vision of her now was with him. She was captivating; she never made a mistake; she never grated upon his mood. She had soothed and comforted him. Above all, she had convinced him that she loved him. He could not doubt that she loved him. There was her power; there had been her power all along.

"I will tell her," he thought. Then he began to hope. He wished that he had not waited so long since he had received Salome's note. He had been fighting the same fight over and over ever since. If he were going to hold to his word the one way to do was to write to Salome. The one way to do was to avoid seeing her. That potent power of personal presence, the memory of which unavoidably fades somewhat in absence, that was the power to be avoided. And here he was with Salome again, and the first moment had proved to him that that mysterious force which drew him to her as strong as ever; nay, it was stronger.

He had been gradually building up a shallow belief that he could be happy with Miss Nunally. Miss Nunally had such exquisite tact: she was so entertaining; so audacious, yet not too audacious. And she loved him.

It was now late to be convinced that he should simply have lived on without trying to build up anything. How could he know that the first impulse of one who has lost the best is to try and put something else in its place; to pretend that something else is best, though knowing piteously all the time that it is not.

"I will tell her," he now said aloud.

He hastened after Salome.

"I will tell her," he said eagerly when he had reached her side.

"You will tell her?"

Salome said the words after him. She did not understand what he meant. She hardly thought it necessary that she should understand. There was one fact that was very plain to her.

"Yes, I will tell Portia," went on Moore quickly. "She will know. She will remember that I have loved you ever since I saw you. She will refuse to marry me. She does not know how I have been thinking of you always, though I have tried so hard to forget. I suppose she believes that I have forgotten."

Salome made no response to these words. She had resumed her walk, going forward intently as if her one object were to reach the end of the wood. She was thinking that she wished she could be at home. She wanted to be under the roof with her mother. Her mother had been right.

"I am going to explain to Portia," said Moore again. "Salome!" impetuously, "won't you say anything to me? Don't you care for me?"

He realized, as soon as he had spoken those words, that it was very weak to put such questions. But the sense of being defrauded, cheated out of happiness, was so great in his mind that he could not speak as he ought. He was groping confusedly and madly after the love that he felt was his, but that he could not grasp and hold. Still, even in this confusion he was conscious of a dim sense that he might be stronger, more manly

"You need not ask me if I care for you," said Salome. She slackened her pace, turning toward her companion. Her face and attitude brought back to Moore those walks through the scrub palmetto in Florida.

"Oh, can't we be happy?" she suddenly cried out. "Why should it be wrong to be happy?"

The entire unexpectedness of this exclamation, the sweetness of it, came to Moore with an indescribable effect. But when he made a swift movement toward her she put up her hands and shrank away from him.

"I must be very wicked," she said brokenly, "very wicked indeed. Oh, Mr. Moore, I wish you would go away. Do go! I have been trying all these months to be good. You see I really tried. And now that I have left the South, now that I have come where it is so wicked to be happy, and where everything is rigid and upright—oh, don't you see how I must have fallen to be able to send you that note? All at once I could not hold out any longer. But it isn't of any use. You are going to be Portia's husband. Mr. Moore, why do you stay here? Haven't I told you that I wanted you to go?"

Moore shut his mouth tightly.

"Yes, you have told me that," he said. "Please don't say it again. It won't make any difference if you do. I shall stay with you every moment that is left me. I tell you," he cried out again, "It's a terrible thing you have done! You have trampled our lives under your feet just for a whim. You sent me away. I knew all about you. What if you had forged? What if you had done this thing or that? Were you not still yourself? Still the woman I love? You thought I couldn't be happy with you. You said you were afraid you were not upright. God! Didn't you know I loved you? Is that some one coming?"

He asked this last question in an angry tone as a figure turned into the road far ahead of them.

Salome tried to look along the road. Though there were no tears in her eyes, the hot cloud still over them prevented her at first from seeing with any distinctness. But directly she recognized Nely Scudder, who was advancing rapidly. Then, as Nely saw the two in the road, she slackened her pace.

Moore felt that it was impossible for him to meet any one now. And he perceived, with a sense of intolerable injury, that Salome was relieved at sight of that person coming.

He said something about seeing her again, that he must see her again, then he turned and hurried away.

Nely Scudder came forward hesitatingly. She was alarmed at sight of Salome's face, but she was intensely interested and alert. She was sure that here was something romantic. She had never been sure in her own mind as to whether the new assistant teacher had been disappointed. Nely thought she would give anything to know whether that very handsome and "stylish" young man was Salome's beau. And had they been quarrelling?

But she could not ask.

"You look awfully," she said as she came up, trying to put on an expression that should give no token of her having seen any one save Salome. But she found she could not quite succeed in this, so she gave a short laugh and remarked that she hoped she had not frightened anybody away, and she was going right along; and anybody that thought she was going to stay and so had run away, might just as well come back.

Having spoken thus, Nely's eyes sought Salome's face again, and then she sprang forward crying distressfully:

"You do look sick! Has that man been saying anything disagreeable? I declare I just hate him!"

Salome had stood trying to recall her power to speak. Now she sat down on the pine needles. She motioned to the girl to sit beside her.

Nely flung herself down at her side and began to cry.

"Oh, what's happened?" she asked tremulously. Then she shook her fist in the air and repeated that she "hated him!" In the bottom of her heart was now the conviction that Salome had been disappointed, how nor why she could not imagine. It seemed impossible, too.

"I'll kill him!" she said, in a violent whisper. "I'll kill anybody that makes you look like that. I don't believe you have any idea how you look, Salome. Why, you look just awful!"

Salome placed her arm about Nely's waist, but she did not yet speak. It did not occur to her that there was anything to say. She was aware of a slight, dim sense of comfort in this contact with a human being who loved her. She knew very well that Nely had an enthusiastic affection for her.

"Can't you speak? Can't you speak ever again?"

Nely put these questions in the most anxious manner. She made a movement to rise, saying she guessed she would go for a doctor.

She was pulled back again, and presently she felt a soft, cold kiss on her cheek. And Salome said:

"I can speak well enough. But let's sit here quietly for a few minutes. I will put my head on your shoulder like this."

Nely immediately held herself strongly in her position. She had a certain feeling of exultation in her anxiety, exultation because she was allowed to sit and have Salome's head on her shoulder. To her Salome was the very perfection of women. Mrs. Scudder often told her daughter that she "did wish that Nely would talk of something 'sides S'lome Gerry. Not but what S'lome Gerry was well enough, but she s'posed there was other folks in the world jest as good."

Here Nely would toss her head and reply.

"Just as good? I don't care if there is. It isn't goodness that makes you love anybody. But she's just as good as she can be, too. She isn't like folks that I've seen before, that are so uninteresting that you can't stand it, any way. Do you s'pose, mar, it's because she almost had consumption and went to Florida? Or what do you s'pose 'tis? If I thought 'twas that, I d' know but I'd just up and have consumption, and then par would send me to Florida: and then maybe I'd begin to be interesting."

Here Nely would laugh shrilly. Once she added with more seriousness than her mother quite liked:

"I certainly would do most anything if I could be anywhere near as interesting as Salome Gerry."

"I guess you're full up to the average, Nely," responded Mrs. Scudder proudly. "'N' I guess S'lome is just what she is 'thout anything to do with Florida. She's a pleasant, pretty-lookin' girl, but I must say I don't see nothin' remarkable in her."

"You don't? Well, that's the queerest thing I ever did hear," said Nely.

It was on one of these occasions that Mrs. Scudder asked if it was generally thought that S'lome give good satisfaction as assistant at the High School.

Nely took the high ground of not knowing and not caring. She said that it was against any person not to like Salome.

"Have you heard anything?" sharply.

Mrs. Scudder said she hadn't heard anything of any account. But she believed Mis' Hill did say that some considered that S'lome wasn't quite strict enough in some things.

"Pooh!" retorted Nely, "who's Mrs. Hill, any way. I should like to know!"

"She's a real good woman, Nely," was the reprimanding reply.

"I don't care if she is. She hasn't brains enough to fill the half of a peanut shell," said the girl.

"It ain't her fault if she ain't, and nobody wants to fill peanut shells with brains. You shouldn't talk so, Nely. I s'pose," with an air of unmistakable interest, "you ain't never heard for certain whether S'lome's ben disappointed or not, have ye?"

It was this question, often repeated, that now recurred to the girl as she sat under the pine tree with Salome's head resting on her shoulder.

Who was that man? Nely had never seen any one in the least like him, and her glimpse of him had been tantalizingly brief. Yes, it must be almost a positive fact that Salome had a love affair, and it did not seem as if it could be just like other girls having beaus and getting married. No, there was something different about this.

Nely sat in perfect stillness. She was afraid to breathe deeply lest she should disturb her companion. If only Salome would tell her something. Nely felt within herself an unlimited capacity for keeping secrets and for sympathizing. Next to having a love affair of her own would be the fortune that should make her the confidante of the love affair of some one else. And it really seemed as if now she was right in the midst of something as good as a novel; only she felt worse than any novel ever made her feel. She liked a good cry when a heroine was suffering, but some way this was different.

She tried to look down at the face on her shoulder, but she could not see it without moving her head, and she was resolved not to move.

She was somewhat frightened that Salome should be so very still. Again that wish recurred to go for a doctor.

Nely bore it as long as she could, and then she said:

"Salome," in the smallest kind of a whisper.

"Yes," said the other girl without changing her position.

"Oh, do, do let me do something for you!" cried Nely in an agony of anxiety. "I wish you'd just move, or something, won't you?"

Salome raised her head. She smiled at her companion.

"You needn't worry about me," she said quietly.

Nely clasped her hands tragically.

"Can't I help you?" she asked, with such a wistful emphasis that Salome smiled again.

"Why, you have helped me by just sitting beside me and being still," she said.

"Oh, have I?" doubtfully.

"Yes, indeed. And now let's go home. This isn't much of a half-holiday after all, is it? Where were you going?"

"I was coming of an errand for mother over to your house."

"Well, come now."

The two rose and began walking slowly out toward the opening in the wood.

It seemed to Nely that she could not contain her sympathy nor her curiosity; but the latter she would not express, "not if she died for it," she told herself. She tried not to let her eyes wander to Salome's face; somehow it appeared dishonorable for her to try to pry into her companion's secrets; but in spite of all her efforts she could not keep her glance from going with humiliating frequency to the face near her.

She was rather disappointed that Salome did not wring her hands; she had an ill suppressed desire also that Salome should tear her hair. Surely that was the way a real heroine should do under such conditions.

Having had these thoughts, Nely had sense enough to be ashamed of them, though she could not put them quite away from her. She recalled that some first-class heroines were proudly composed and self-contained. That was really the way to be, of course.

Very soon the two girls emerged from the shadow and were going over the crisp gray moss of the pasture. The sunlight was very bright and warm here; and the air was full of the scent of cedar, and bayberry, and sweet fern.

The sunshine, falling full upon them, seemed to have a noticeable effect upon the elder of the two. She stopped and turned her head toward the west where in deep blue, cloudless spaces the sun was going slowly down. It was yet some hours, however, to the sunset.

Salome pushed back her hat. There was a pathetic eagerness in the way she looked upward.

"You've heard of people being what they called marked with something, haven't you, Nely?" she asked.

Nely was surprised, but she answered immediately:

"You mean when they like or dislike something so much that they are unreasonable 's they can be?" she asked.

"Yes, just that. And you don't think they're quite responsible, do you?"

Salome put this question as if even this child's answer would be of some weight with her.

Nely stared an instant before she replied:

"No, I don't see how they can be, do you? There's Ann Tomlins, you know; she can't bear the sight nor smell of strawberries."

"I remember Ann Tomlins," said Salome. "Nobody blames her for it, I suppose."

"Why, of course they don't!" with some indignation. "But I guess I don't know what you are thinking about."

"I was thinking that I am marked with a love of the sun. That's why I liked Florida so well. It was never too hot for me. If I can have the sun, hot and clear, I can bear a good many things. We have to bear a good many things, don't we, Nely?"

Nely did not know why something in that voice affected her so that she began to cry. She turned and flung herself into Salome's arms and cried as if her heart were breaking. Salome held her closely and spoke soothingly to her. In a few moments Nely lifted her head and declared that she was just as silly as she could be, and she was sure she didn't know what was the matter with her. "But oh, she did long to comfort Salome so!"

Salome laughed a little gently at this, and then they went on again, now among the birches through which Moore had come a short time ago. As they came out of the birches and in sight of the cottage among the rocks just above them, Salome paused, catching Nely's hand as she said:

"You can keep a secret, can't you, Nely?"

"Oh, yes!" proudly.

"Don't tell, then. I should hate to have Mrs. Hill and all the rest talking. You understand?"

"Oh, yes!" again, "you can trust me. And—and——" Nely paused and then burst out, "Ain't you going to be happy, Salome?"

Salome involuntarily turned her face up toward the sun again. The pallor of that face and the glow in the eyes made a deep impression upon Nely. She had never seen any one look like that, and she did not in the least know what it meant. How could she know that Salome, least of all, knew what it meant?

Salome seemed to rouse herself.

"Happy?" she said. "Oh, I don't know. Mother says it is not necessary to be happy. It is only necessary to be in the right."

"Oh, dear!" cried Nely. "Then in a moment, "Isn't that your mother beckoning to us? Do I look 's if I'd been crying? Laura Hunt says I show it ever so long after I've been crying. I don't know what I should do if anybody should ask me if I'd been crying. I'll just step long enough to have your mother give me the rule for that Harrison cake. We've lost ours, and we expect a lot of company next week."

They hurried up the rise in the road. Just before they reached the gate Nely paused long enough to say:

"You needn't be a mite afraid that I shall ever tell as long as I live."

(To be continued.)

JOLLY POLYANDERS.

From The New-Haven Leader.

Just at this time, when so many ladies are apparently finding even one husband too many, Mrs. Isabella Bishop contributes to "Leisure Hour" a chapter on how the women of far away Thibet are happy as the day is long with four or five husbands apiece. Their determination to stick to many husbands instead of one is thus far the insurmountable obstacle to converting these Thibetans to Christianity, Mrs. Bishop says.

The Thibetan eldest son is the principal member of the family. When they reach a certain age, even his father and mother must step down and out and go into a small house, leaving him the main establishment. There he takes his bride. He is her "first man," so to speak, but along with him she takes as husbands all his brothers, be the number great or small. The more brothers he has, the more husbands she. The women all like it and declare they would not have it otherwise for the world. "We have three or four men to help us instead of one," they say. The stupidity and monotony of living with just one husband, European fashion, are appalling to them, and they pity their European sisters sincerely. Here is their unanswerable logic: "If I had only one husband, and he should die, I would be a widow; if I had two or three, I am never a widow. See?"

It is the custom for all her acquaintances to make a present of money to the Thibetan bride. With this she leases a field for herself, and its crops are thenceforth for her own use exclusively. It is rather odd that polyandry was introduced among the Thibetans originally as an economic measure, so that the population should not outrun the means of subsistence.

VICTORIA'S BLACK KNIGHT.

DISTINGUISHED CONSIDERATION ACCORDED TO THE NEGRO RACE IN EUROPE.

Sir Samuel Lewis, who has just been raised by Queen Victoria to the dignity of a "Knight of the most distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George," an honor usually reserved for Her Majesty's diplomatic envoys, colonial governors and premiers and for generals and admirals, is a full-blooded, coal-black negro, who, having taken his degree at the London University, is now a member of the legislative council of Sierra Leone. It is the first time that a British Order of Knighthood has ever been conferred upon an African, or that a woman of color has attained the right of being addressed as "My Lady." Yet this is by no means the only manifestation on the part of Queen Victoria of her regard for the negro race. Two years ago an old colored mammy from the Free State of Liberia, who had saved up her money shilling by shilling for the purpose of going to England to see the Queen, was graciously received by Her Majesty at Windsor, invited to take a seat beside her (even the greatest statesmen and grandest ladies in the land are obliged to remain standing in their Sovereign's presence), and was treated in a manner that led a foreign Minister who happened to be at Windsor at the time to remark plaintively that during all the years that he had represented his Government at the Court of St. James he had never been accorded anything like so much consideration. In France the whole nation, irrespective of party or politics, turned out the other day to welcome home the conqueror of Dahomey, the only General who has covered himself with military glory since the days of the Franco-German war. Yet this General who aroused so much popular enthusiasm that the Government became alarmed, and that his prospects of taking the place of Sadi Carnot as President of the Republic were openly discussed in the Parisian press, is a mulatto, a fact which did not prevent him from being invested with the Star of a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor.

When I was first at Vienna, some fifteen or sixteen years ago, I remember that the favorite and constant playmate of young Archduchess Valerie, the daughter of the Emperor, was a young negro named Mahmoud, who had been employed in the Egyptian department of the International Exposition of 1873, where he had taken the fancy of the Empress to such a degree that she attached him to her household. Notwithstanding his color and the inferiority of his rank, he was treated with far greater condescension and familiarity, and admitted to much more intimacy not only by the Imperial children, but also by the Empress and Emperor themselves, than if he had borne one of the most illustrious names in the Austro-Hungarian nobility. At Lisbon I have been present when the late King solemnly and in the presence of his whole court invested three full-blooded negroes, two of them from the west coast of Africa and one from the east, with the dignity of Knighthood of the Order of Christ, and one of the principal personages in the Kingdom in those days was an aged negress who had been with the Queen ever since her marriage, and who was chief of Her Majesty's attendants and maids, besides being her most trusted counsellor and influential adviser, the Queen in her turn having her husband, King Luis, entirely under her thumb and blindly submissive to her will.

I am led to draw attention to these evidences of the marked favor enjoyed by the negro race in the old world by the comments of a number of the New-York and Chicago papers on a trivial incident that occurred the other day at the World's Fair. A pretty and perfectly respectable little Old Austrian waiting-maid at the cafe in "Old Vienna" was challenged by some American visitors to kiss a swarthy African seated at one of the tables. This she proceeded to do without the slightest hesitation and apparently without any suspicion of indelicacy in the act, the fact that the victim of the pleasantry was a negro possessing no more difference than if he had been a Caucasian. "No woman who had lived any length of time in this country would have done such a thing," add the papers, the offence in their eyes being not the mere act of kissing a stranger for the sake of a wager and as a piece of pleasantry, but that the object of the latter should have been a negro.

Great difficulty would be experienced, however, in bringing the Viennese waitress to appreciate this. She would find it difficult to understand why it should be regarded as a greater breach of conventionality to kiss a negro by way of a joke than to kiss a white man. Indeed, if the truth were known it is probable that if called upon to choose she would probably express her preference for the man of color. The latter enjoys a favor and consideration in the old world that those of my readers who have never visited Europe will find it difficult to comprehend. He is made much of, petted and admired, especially by the fair sex. In fact, I suppose you would find just the same difficulty in understanding our attitude toward the negro as we Europeans experience in accounting for yours.

I obtained some personal experience in the matter when, a greater number of years ago than I care to admit, I quitted Washington, taking back with me to Europe a Virginian darky who during my two years' stay in this country had served me as a valet. His name, I remember, was Mike—which did not prevent him from abominating the Irish race. We were scarcely three days out on the way across the Atlantic when I was abruptly reminded of the fact that I was no longer in the United States, but on board an English ship, by finding myself obliged to apologize to a coal black gentleman, the President or Prime Minister of the Liberian Republic, I forget which, who occupied the cabin next but one to mine, and whom in the dusk of the evening I had addressed with more vigor than suavity under the impression that, instead of being "His Excellency," he was my servant Mike. We landed at Queenstown late at night after a very stormy voyage, and on arriving at the hotel I was considerably disgusted to find myself assigned to a poky little back room on the third floor. On complaining of the character of my quarters, Mike kindly offered to change with me, and I found that they had given him the best front room in the house on the first floor, under the impression, as I subsequently discovered, that he was an African Prince and I merely his attendant.

Before we had been long in London I found that he was making money at a rapid rate and in a somewhat peculiar manner. Some of my readers may be aware that the soldiers of the London garrison supplement their scanty pay by taking servant girls out for walks in the park on Sunday afternoon. The domestic in question have, as a rule, but a single afternoon out each week, generally on Sunday, and on that day they deck themselves out in all their finery and, aping their employers, promenade in the park, usually up and down the banks of the Serpentine. Man does not like to be alone, and still less does woman. Hence the girls felt the necessity of a suitable escort, not so much for the sake of conversation as for the look of the thing. The consequence is that they secure the services of a soldier, who promenades them in the park for a couple of hours in return for a stipulated sum, after which he escorts her home and leaves her at the back door of the house where she is employed. There is a regular tariff, an infantryman having to content himself with a shilling, whereas the far more stately and imposing life and horse-guards receive as much as half a crown. While Mike was in London he seriously interfered with this source of revenue of the British army. It seemed as if all the cooks and servant-girls in South Kensington, where I was staying, were bent on having him walk with them on Sunday, conscious of the fact that his color and unusual appearance would attract far more attention to themselves than an ordinary trooper or even a sergeant of horse-guards. So active was the competition that I have known Mike to be paid as much as six and even seven shillings for promenading with stout and mature-looking cooks for a couple of hours, along the Vanity Fair of Hyde Park of a Sunday afternoon.

At Paris the attention of the fair sex to my colored gentleman became a source of considerable embarrassment to me, and I had great trouble to prevent them from completely turning the boy's head. They served, however, to convince him that he was immeasurably superior to all other men-servants of the white race, and it was most amusing to observe the manner in which pompous-looking maitres d'hotel, stately grooms-of-the-chamber and episcopal-looking coachmen permitted themselves to be patronized by Mike. His conceit became amazing, and I remember especially that when, on the day after the death of the late King of Hanover at Paris, I went to His Majesty's house in the Rue de Presbourg to write my name on the visitors' book, I was astonished to see Mike in the act of coming out. I had not time to speak to him at the moment, but a minute or two later, when inscribing my name, I was horrified to see, in a particularly large and scrawling hand, that of Mike near the top of the page, and figuring just between that of Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador, and of the Duc d'Aumale. On reaching home I immediately inquired what on earth he meant by such a piece of presumption, whereupon he was good enough to inform me that he had overheard me saying that it was the correct thing to do, and that, inasmuch as the Crown Prince of Hanover, now known as the Duke of Cumberland, with whom I was rather intimately acquainted, had tipped him on several occasions quite liberally, Mike considered it only proper to take this means of conveying to him his expression of sympathy for the loss that he had sustained.

Mike subsequently accompanied me to Egypt, where the contempt which he manifested for the people of his race who had not enjoyed the advantage of American citizenship and education was most entertaining. I regret that I was obliged to part with him there, owing to his having become so grand a personage that he had actually taken advantage of the low scale of pay for domestic servants on the banks of the Nile to engage another black man as a valet of his own. This unfortunate wretch, my gentleman's gentleman, was forced not only to valet Mike, but also to look after my things, Mike having become too great a personage to demean himself with any such menial work, and as he was very exacting where his own things were concerned, he naturally enjoyed the preference, I only coming in as second best. This state of things could not be tolerated, so I found myself compelled to present Mike with a return ticket to the United States. I must confess that I was surprised that he should have availed himself thereof, for he could certainly never hope to find in this country anything like the attention, the consideration and regard which were accorded to him in the Old World.

EX-ATTACHE.

ROSE IN HARD LUCK.

From The Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

A sample rat-trap was in Gerrish's drugstore in Lewiston a few days ago, waiting for a customer. It was a new-fangled rat-trap which some one had left there for fun or sale, or to be called for.

The trap was set and was in the open shop where it could be seen. About 10:30 o'clock a big dog came in with a little girl, or vice versa, although the dog was bigger than the girl. The little girl bought something, and the proprietor was tying up the package, while the dog went prowling around after the manner of dogs, and was in a moment forgot.

"Pease, thir, has you got any cur——"

Just then "Whoop la! Rip-p-p, s-s-t-boom-sh; Ki-yi-yi," out came the dog with about seven inches of tongue protruding, to which dangled a rat-trap, full size, hanging to the tongue with a fifty-light dynamo grip. In an instant there was fun in the apothecary shop. You have seen a dog fight with eleven dogs in it? No? Well, maybe you have seen a rooster with his head cut off? No? Then you haven't any idea the way this dog did up the drug-store. Why, he fairly owned it. Over the boxes; in behind the counter; out again; seven laps around the stove; three trips into the back shop; kicking up his heels until the dust flew; knocking over bottles; opening up cases of last year's almanacs; howling like a calliope; clanking like a threshing machine. For about two minutes they gave him full swing. The clerk tried to corner him, but it was no use.

"Bothe! Bothe!" cried the little girl, but Bose didn't know her. He regarded her as an utter stranger. He had a nearer and closer attachment than any mere family affair. He had too much business to bother with little girls. He was too much "in it" to waste his time responding to mere friendly calls. Twice he dashed at the door, but it was shut and the proprietor didn't want to lose the trap.

"He'll run a week," said a man who was climbing into a chair in order to give the dog more room.

"Chloroform him," said the newspaper man from behind the soda fountain.

"Give him a dose of fly powder," shouted the clerk.

"Snap!" The dog had stopped suddenly, had shaken his head and the trap had been flung three feet away, taking with it a dainty morsel of his tongue.

"Poor Bothe," said the little girl, as she opened the door, but Bose never even wagged his tail as with one despairing look at the inside of the store so that he could remember it the next time, he fled like a wild, whooping demoniac which on a broomstick down Lisbon-st. And he may be going yet.